

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505



8 NOV 1984

Mr. Nicholas C. Burckel
Chairman, Joint Committee on
Historians and Archivists
Joseph Regenstein Library
University of Chicago
1100 East 57th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Dear Mr. Burckel:

I have a great deal of sympathy for the views that you expressed on behalf of the Joint Committee on Historians and Archivists in your letter of 19 October. I join you and the Congress in admiring the Department of State's distinguished series, The Foreign Relations of the United States, and I recognize its important role in informing the American people about their government's foreign policy.

We at CIA take seriously our relatively small but unique role in helping the Department of State compile this series. Our principal contribution is to provide their historians with CIA documents at the outset of their work on each volume, and at the end to review for possible declassification those CIA documents they propose to print.

The History Staff in my office arranges access for Department of State historians to classified CIA-originated documents they wish to see either here, at the several Presidential Libraries, or in other official repositories. After these historians select the CIA documents they wish, our History Staff arranges for their review. We make available--ordinarily at the original classification level--as many of these documents as we possibly can to the Department historians, who can then consider the documents for use in the Foreign Relations volumes. We later receive and review for possible declassification those CIA documents that the Department of State proposes to include in each Foreign Relations volume.

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Since these volumes often run to thousands of pages, coordinating the declassification review within the CIA has not been an easy task. In 1978, to reduce the time spent in this process, the declassification review procedure was modified to improve control and increase efficiency. This reduced the time we needed to review the manuscripts and eliminated many earlier problems. Since 1978 we believe that our record for timely responses to the Department of State on the Foreign Relations of the United States series has been quite good, but we will make a special effort to improve our response time even more.

Fully recognizing the important contribution that the Foreign Relations series makes to scholarship and a well-informed public, we carefully weigh the historical value of information against the need to protect our national security interests. This is not to say that when we are in doubt that we automatically declassify, but we do give as full consideration as possible to the opposing equity--enlightenment of the American public.

Sincerely,

/s/ William J. Casey

William J. Casey
Director of Central Intelligence

DDA/OIS/CRD/ [redacted] (31 October 1984)
Retyped: (02 November 1984)

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